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ABSTRACT

This document presents El Camino College's academic program review guidelines as of January 1999. Academic programs are scheduled for full evaluation once every six years and involve a two-year process. By or before the beginning of each fall semester, the Office of Academic Affairs notifies the dean of each division as to which programs are to be reviewed during that academic year. The department's full-time faculty decides which instructors will become members of the self-study team. The chair(s) of all self-study teams should receive an orientation in the program-review process from the Coordinator for Academic Program Review. Program self-studies contain six major sections: (1) overview and responses to previous recommendations; (2) the program environment; (3) the program curriculum; (4) program resources; (5) program effectiveness and efficiency; and (6) recommendations for the coming three years. Vocational or other programs that are accredited by off-campus agencies should use the self-study and validation procedures prescribed by their accrediting agencies. Three years after the completion of the self-study, a brief midterm report is due. All faculty in a program working on self-studies or midterm reports receive up to 15 hours of flex credit for their efforts if they are not compensated through other means. (VWC)

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ED 436 195

EL CAMINO COLLEGE

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

GUIDELINES

JANUARY 1999

EL CAMINO COLLEGE
16007 Crenshaw Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90506

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EL CAMINO COLLEGE

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
Guidelines

January 1999

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The Program-Review Process and its Timeline

Academic programs are scheduled for full evaluation once every six years. With the approval of the division dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, a large program may be divided into separate components for the purpose of evaluation. A department that needs additional time for a self study may receive a one-year extension, again with the approval of the division dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. No further extensions are possible. A program that does not complete its self study within the expected time will not have another opportunity to do so until its turn in the six-year cycle comes up again. However, it should be noted that El Camino Budget Development Committee criteria for allocating new funds to programs emphasize "planning based on needs assessment and/or program review."

Program review involves a two-year process. During the first year, faculty in a department conduct a self study in which they address questions related to their program. During the second year, that self study is evaluated by members of the College Validation Committee. The Validation Committee will make a report containing recommendations for the future of the program. The self study and the Validation Committee report become, in turn, the basis on which recommendations are formulated for the El Camino Cabinet and Board of Trustees.

The first draft of the self study should be completed during March of the first year. The final draft is due by the end of the Spring semester.

Identifying Programs to be Reviewed

By or before the beginning of each Fall semester, the Office of Academic Affairs notifies the dean of each division as to which programs are to be reviewed within that academic year. The division dean then convenes a meeting of the department's full-time faculty to form the self-study team.

Forming the Self-study Team

The department's full-time faculty ordinarily decide which instructors will become members of the self-study team. There should be a broad representation from each department's program, whenever possible. The number of team members is exclusively the prerogative of the department's faculty. When a department is staffed entirely with adjunct faculty or when members of a department are unable to determine who should be

on the self-study team, then the Dean will have the responsibility of forming the self-study team. Qualities that should be looked for in establishing team membership include: familiarity with the department/program's curriculum, facilities, co-curricular activities (where applicable), history and staffing. Additionally, leadership qualities and familiarity with the campus should be considered.

At their first meeting, the self-study team should elect a chair or co-chairs who will have the responsibility of calling meetings, acting as liaison between the team and the institution as a whole, keeping minutes, directing the work of the team, and submitting the report.

The Work of the Self-study Team

The chair(s) of all self-study teams should receive an orientation in the program-review process from the Coordinator for Academic Program Review. In practical terms, this orientation will probably occur on one date in September or October, with all chairs meeting at the same time.

Once the self-study teams have completed the orientation, they may begin their work with the assistance of the Coordinator for Academic Program Review and the ECC Office of Institutional Research. During 1998-99, the Coordinator is Joe Georges, Department of Political Science. He can be reached at 660-3739. The institutional researcher is Mike Wilson. He can be contacted at 660-6123.

Prior to submitting the self-study report, each team should take the opportunity to have others review it and to assist the team, from their perspective, in making the report as accurate as possible. The chair(s) of the self-study team should submit a copy of the self-study draft to other members of the department for review. This should be accomplished in a timely manner to allow for discussion by each faculty and staff member affected by the report. The self-study chair(s) should also present the division dean with a draft of the report in a timely manner to allow for sufficient review and discussion. The team should meet with the dean to work on a collaborative refinement of the report. The dean's role at this stage of the process is to assist the team in presenting an accurate report, but not to direct the work of the team. If significant disagreement surfaces between the teams' report and the dean's perceptions, the team chair(s) and the dean should work together towards consensus on the report prior to submission to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Any documents pertinent to the development of the self-study report should be included in appendices. Such items, as statistical data and survey results should be included.

If a faculty member in a program undertaking a self study disagrees with the findings or recommendations made in the penultimate draft of that document, such disagreements may be registered in an attachment to the final draft of the self study.

As indicated earlier, the first draft of the self study should be completed by March. The final draft is due by the end of the Spring semester. Once the report has been completed,

the self-study team chair(s) should forward a copy to the Coordinator for Academic Program Review and a copy to the division dean.

Guidelines for Self Studies

Program self studies contain six major sections. In each section, there are issues that should be addressed by the department.

I. Overview and Responses to Previous Recommendations

1. What is the purpose, or what are the purposes, of the program and what needs does it fill?
2. Does the El Camino Catalog description of the program include a statement of purpose and, for programs offering a degree or certificate, a brief summary of expected student-learning outcomes? If not, a paragraph with this information should be written for that publication. (El Camino is obliged to adhere to an accreditation standard that requires that we identify and make public "expected learning outcomes for ... degree and certificate programs.")
3. How long has the program been offered at El Camino? Have there been important events that have shaped the history of the program? What major changes, if any, in curriculum or organization or facilities has the program experienced since the last self study? (If a previous self study has given an account of the history of the program, only an update is needed.)
4. What progress has the department made toward meeting the executive summary recommendations formulated at the end of its last program review?

II. The Program Environment

1. What changes/trends in the off-campus environment (both positive and negative) have affected the ability of the program to fulfill its purpose(s)? For example, have employment opportunities increased or decreased for students trained in a vocational field? Have changing CSU or UC transfer requirements had an impact upon enrollment in the program or in any of its courses? Discuss the reason(s) for your answers.
2. What, if any, environmental changes are likely in the near future that will affect the program?

III. The Program Curriculum

1. Describe any major and/or certificate associated with the program. What evidence exists that these are meeting specific student needs? For example, how many students declare that they are pursuing this major? How many students in recent years have graduated with this major? If there is a significant difference between these numbers, how should that difference be accounted for? Review the major and/or certificate requirements and briefly explain why these are appropriate. Should any requirements be added or deleted? Why? Is there a need for a new certificate associated with the program? Why or why not?
2. Courses in the program should be reviewed for compliance with Title V. For example, all credit degree-applicable courses must have a critical-thinking component. In addition, there should be a course content review for courses

with prerequisites, co-requisites, advisories and other enrollment limitations such as mandatory auditions. (The justification of requisites for some courses may need supporting data indicating that a student is highly unlikely to succeed without the requisite.) In addition, a determination should be made about whether course offerings are appropriate in terms of their relationship to the discipline and to the students typically served by the program. With regard to the last point, the self study should determine whether or not courses required for a major or certificate are offered frequently enough, and with enough sections, so that students declaring this major can complete those requirements within a reasonable time – ordinarily two years.

IV. Program Resources

1. During the last academic year, what percentage of program sections was taught by full-time faculty? What reason is there to believe that the number of full-time faculty is either adequate or inadequate for the program's curriculum?
2. What professional and community activities have faculty participated in since the last self study? Are the facilities housing the program adequate for its responsibilities? Why or why not?
3. Is the instructional equipment available to the program appropriate for the curriculum and for the methods by which classes are taught? Why or why not?
4. Are Library and other learning resources adequate for the program needs of faculty and students? Explain the basis for making this determination.

V. Program Effectiveness And Efficiency

1. Does the evidence available, including the data on enrollment and retention trends and surveys of student satisfaction, indicate that the program is effective in accomplishing its purpose(s)? Explain the basis for this judgment.
2. If there are other measures used by the program to judge its effectiveness, what do those measures indicate about program performance during recent years? For example, what is the employment rate and median wage of students leaving a vocational program, as suggested by wage record data available from the state, and how do those indicators compare with statewide averages for those programs?
3. What was the program's cost per FTES of educating its students during the most recently completed academic year and how does that cost compare with the average cost per FTES of similar ECC academic programs? Different kinds of programs inevitably involve different kinds of costs. It is the intent here to compare vocational programs to vocational programs, laboratory programs to laboratory programs, etc.
4. What was the program's WSCH/FTE during the most recently completed academic year? How does that compare with program WSCH/FTE during the previous two years and with division and College WSCH/FTE?

VI. Recommendations for the Coming Three Years

What are your major recommendations for program improvement during each of the coming three years?

Self Studies for Interdisciplinary Degrees

The evaluation of interdisciplinary degrees such as General Education may use a simplified self -study format that addresses three broad questions: (1) What is the purpose of the degree and what student needs does it attempt to meet? (2) What evidence exists that the degree is achieving its purpose and meeting specific student needs? For example, how many students declare that they are pursuing this major? How many students in recent years have graduated with this major? If there is a significant difference between these numbers, how should that difference be accounted for? Have there been changes in the internal or external environment that would affect the case for continuing to offer the major? If so, what are the changes? (3) What recommendations do you make for the future of this degree at El Camino over the next three years? Should the College continue to offer it? If so, should there be any changes in requirements for the degree? Why or why not?

Self Studies for Programs in which an Annual Report is Routinely Completed

Some programs, such as the Honors Transfer Program and the International Education Program, routinely complete annual reports. In order to avoid placing an unnecessary burden on those program coordinators, the sixth-year program review shall be undertaken by means of the annual report. With the approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the focus of the sixth-year report may be expanded to address relevant issues not considered in previous reports.

Programs Exempt from the Self-study Process Described in this Document

Vocational or other programs that are accredited by off-campus agencies (e.g., Nursing, Radiologic Technology, and Respiratory Care) should use the self-study and validation procedures prescribed by their accrediting agencies.

Midterm Report

Three years after the completion of the self study, a brief midterm report will be due. The midterm report should focus on two questions: (1) What progress has the department made toward meeting the executive summary recommendations formulated at the end of its last program review? (2) Are there any new curricular or other issues that should be addressed by the program during the next three years?

Flex Credit or Other Compensation for Faculty Completing Self Studies

All faculty in a program working on self studies or midterm reports will receive up to 15 hours of flex credit for their efforts if they are not compensated through other means. The flex credit or compensation is to be awarded upon completion of the self study and its acceptance by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President of the Academic Senate. The self-study chair(s) should notify the Coordinator if there are additional department faculty qualifying for flex credit because of their contributions to the project. Faculty flex-credit reports are due in the Staff Development Office by mid-May of each year.

Send comments to the Coordinator for Academic Program Review:

Joseph Georges

Department of Political Science

(310) 660-3739